



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT
BROOKS TOWERS
1020 15TH STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80202



In Reply Refer To:

May 26, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: Director
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

FROM: Assistant Director
Western Field Operations

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Approve the Crandall Canyon Mine
Mining Plan, Genwal Coal Company, Inc., Emery County,
Utah Federal Lease U-54762

I. Recommendation

I recommend approval by the Assistant Secretary--Land and Minerals Management of the Crandall Canyon mine mining plan for Federal lease U-54762. My recommendation is based on the complete permit application package (PAP) submitted by Genwal Coal Company, Inc. (Genwal) and updated to December 28, 1988; an Environmental Assessment prepared by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE); the State Decision Document & Technical Analysis prepared by the Utah Department of Oil, Gas, & Mining (DOGM); comments and concurrences of other Federal agencies; and the administrative record. Pursuant to 30 CFR Part 746, I have attached the decision document for the proposed mining plan action.

Because the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Utah have entered into a cooperative agreement which provides for the delegation to the State of the permitting responsibilities for operations on Federal lands pursuant to Section 523 of SMCRA, the previously issued Federal permit will be terminated upon approval of this mining plan.

The proposed mining plan action will authorize mining of approximately 1.5 million additional tons of Federal coal within 256 acres of Federal lease U-54762. The Crandall Canyon mine mining plan was originally approved under the Federal lands program on November 12, 1982. Since that

approval there has been one modification to the Crandall Canyon mine mining plan which was approved on March 11, 1987. With this action, the Crandall Canyon mine mining plan area will contain a total of 411 acres, including the previously approved mining plan area for Federal lease SL-062648 and the proposed mining plan area for Federal lease U-54762.

Utah Department of Oil, Gas, & Mining (DOGM) reviewed the PAP under the Utah State program and the Utah cooperative agreement (30 CFR 944.30). Pursuant to the Utah State program and the cooperative agreement, Utah DOGM approved the PAP on March 7, 1989. Utah DOGM determined that a bond in the amount of \$136,729 is adequate for reclamation under the State permit number ACT/015/032. The bond is payable to the State of Utah and OSMRE. Including the 256 acre permit revision area, the total permitted area of the Crandall Canyon mine contains approximately 415 acres.

OSMRE has consulted with other Federal agencies for compliance with the requirements of applicable Federal laws, and their comments and concurrences are included in the decision document. The resource recovery and protection plan was reviewed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for compliance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, and 43 CFR Part 3480, and BLM recommended approval in a letter dated January 27, 1989. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided its biological opinion under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act in a letter dated April 6, 1989. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with OSMRE's assessment and recommendations for protection of cultural resources in a letter dated November 28, 1988. The Manti-LaSal National Forest concurred with the proposed mining plan action in a letter dated May 23, 1989.

This mining plan approval will supplement the previous mining plan approval for the Crandall Canyon mine. This mining plan approval will be in conformance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, and other applicable Federal laws and regulations.

The mining plan approval document included in the decision document reflects the mining plan as previously approved along with this recommended mining plan action. The mining plan approval document identifies the leased Federal coal lands in the previously approved mining plan area along with the leased Federal coal lands recommended for approval with this action.

The proposed mining plan approval document contains one special condition of approval required by the USDA Forest Service to monitor the potential subsidence and protect the escarpments in the lease area.

This mining plan action will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. The impacts of approval of this mining plan modification and alternatives are described in the Environmental Assessment included in the decision document.

II. Background

The Crandall Canyon underground coal mine is located in Emery County, Utah, 15 miles west of Huntington. Mining operations utilize room and pillar mining methods. The mine has been in operation since 1983. Approximately 10 acres have been affected by the surface disturbance to date. No additional surface disturbance will result from this action.

Mining is expected to continue for 6 years under Utah permit ACT/015/032 and the approved mining plan. The Hiawatha coal seams will be mined at an average production rate of approximately 360,000 tons per year.

A chronology of events related to the processing of the PAP is included in the decision document. During the review of the PAP, the following major issue was identified. USDA Forest Service expressed its concern over the potential subsidence of the escarpment in Huntington Canyon. Bureau of Land Management assessed the potential for escarpment failure in Huntington Canyon due to mining of the new lease and concluded that the proposed mining would not cause slope or escarpment failure. The USDA Forest Service accepted this conclusion and concurred with the approval of the proposed mining plan with the condition that frequent monitoring by visual surveying is done by the applicant. OSMRE has included this stipulation in this mining plan approval document and Utah DOGM has included a similar condition as part of its permit.

The public was notified of the availability of the PAP for review by publication of newspaper notices for four consecutive weeks ending November 15, 1988. No public comments on the PAP were received during the 30-day public comment period after the public notice was published.

The Federal Lands Review for the new Federal lease U-54762 was done by BLM as part of its approval process for issuing the coal lease.

The PAP submitted by Genwal and updated through December 28, 1988, Utah DOGM's State Decision Document & Technical Analysis provided to OSMRE under the cooperative agreement, the Environmental Assessment of the proposed action and alternatives prepared by OSMRE, other documents prepared by Utah DOGM, and correspondence developed during the review of the PAP are part of OSMRE's administrative record. The information in the PAP, as well as other information identified in the decision document and made available to the applicant, has been reviewed by Utah DOGM staff in coordination with the OSMRE Project Leader.


Allen P. Klein

Date 5/26/89

Attachments